BRULE RIVER STATE FOREST TIMBER SALE PROCEDURE SUMMARY SHEET

1. IDENTIFICATION OF STANDS:
   Annually, the Brule River State Forest (BRSF) Superintendent and forestry staff confirm which forest stands are to be evaluated for harvest. Specific harvest plans are based on the objectives for the forest that have been established in the BRSF master plan. The Department utilizes a computer based forest reconnaissance (RECON) data system that maintains data on "stands" of trees (i.e., groups of trees uniform in species composition, structure and age class distribution growing on a relatively uniform site) within the state forest. For each stand, the Department maintains information including species, size of stand, size class of trees, volume, age, density, condition and silvicultural prescription. Stands are scheduled for harvest based on data previously entered by the forester. Once the state forest staff have confirmed which stands are to be evaluated for harvest, there are a number of steps involved prior to the harvest.

2. CONFORMANCE WITH MASTER PLAN
   Prior to conducting an on-site visit to the selected stands, the forester confirms that the potential harvest of these areas aligns with the master plan. Both the forest-wide goals and more specific land management area goals are reviewed. This information helps the forester in evaluating harvest possibilities and in making silvicultural decisions if a timber sale is warranted.

3. PRELIMINARY EVALUATION:
   The forester conducts a field evaluation to determine if a harvest is warranted. This involves verifying that the stand's reconnaissance (RECON) data are accurate, and that other factors such as pests, weather, or fire have not adversely affected the stand. If the stand has not developed as anticipated and a sale is not warranted, the forester updates the RECON information for that stand and reschedules any management activities.

4. DEVELOPMENT OF PROPOSED HARVEST PLAN:
   If a timber sale is warranted, the forester develops a proposed harvest plan or "prescription" based on the preliminary evaluation. In doing so, the forester will develop a harvest plan that is designed to produce a desired outcome while considering the potential impacts to the watershed, endangered and cultural resources, wildlife habitat, aesthetics, and recreation.

   Details of the harvest are carefully considered, such as: necessary access; location of landings and trails; water quality, aesthetic, cultural, recreational, wildlife, and endangered resource issues; ways to avoid potential conflicts in the sale set-up; suitable times of year for the harvest; and assurance the tract will be regenerated within the capabilities of the site. The prescription includes a description of which trees will be harvested and left after sale completion, and what follow-up treatment will be required such as site preparation or tree planting.

   In developing the prescription, the forester consults with other DNR resource professionals (e.g. wildlife, waters, endangered resources, and fisheries). These other professionals evaluate the impacts, if any, of the harvest prescription on other resources in the forest to assure that the harvest will not negatively impact those resources. The forester would revise the harvest plan to address any additional concerns expressed.

5. PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENT

Pursuant to the BRSF Master Plan's public communication plan, the Department will post information on proposed timber sales, by acreage and area (including town/range/section data) on the DNR Website for BRSF Master Planning. Proposed timber sales will be discussed at the semi-annual public meetings, and the Department will consider comments on proposed timber sales for 30 calendar days following each semi-annual meeting.

6. FINALIZE HARVEST PRESCRIPTION:

After receiving input from the various resource professionals and the public review process, the forester incorporates any necessary changes into the harvest prescription. At this point the prescription is finalized and ready to be implemented in the field.

7. MARK BOUNDARIES & IDENTIFY TREES TO BE CUT:

Once the prescription has been finalized, the forester begins implementing it. This involves identifying the exterior boundaries of the timber sale and identifying harvest methods within the sale. In addition, the forester may indicate landing and road locations and areas protected or modified because of water quality, aesthetic, recreational or ecological reasons. All of these areas are indicated by different colors of paint. On some sales, the individual trees to be harvested or trees to be left are also marked with paint.

8. APPRAISE THE SALE:

A volume estimate of the sale is completed and documented as part of a timber sale prospectus, as more fully described in paragraph 10 below. In doing so, the forester also evaluates factors such as marketability, wood quality, skidding, felling and bucking, and road construction needs. Using these factors, an appraisal of the value of timber is made and minimum bids are established for each species to be sold. The timber sale appraisal is documented on Form 2460-1.

9. TIMBER SALE WRITE-UP:

Four documents complete the paperwork for a timber sale:

a. Timber sale notice and cutting report (Form 2460-1) – This form summarizes all of the tabular data and is used to track sale progress, including the volumes and values harvested from the sale..

b. Narrative (Form 2460-1A)– Documents the rationale and considerations the forester used in establishing the sale. This document contains a written version of the prescription, including discussion of the all the factors that were considered when making the decision to harvest, and the measures to be taken to protect surrounding resources during the harvest.

c. Map -- Depicts the location of the sale area in relation to other features of the forest including roads, trails, surrounding cover types, trails, streams, rivers, lakes and identifies the trees to be cut along with any operational requirements. The map lists all requirements of the timber sale including cutting specifications, landing locations, seasonal restrictions, and other details of the timber sale. The map is very important and is used on-site by the logger when harvesting the sale. The narrative, cutting notice and report, map and contract are kept in the local DNR office as historical records of the sale activity.

d. RECON Update – RECON information is updated based on the data generated from the initial assessment and volume estimate.

The State Forest Superintendent and Area Forestry Leader must approve all state forest timber sales. Small sales, under $3000 in value, may be sold directly to logging contractors at the discretion of the State Forest Superintendent. Sales under $3000 are normally used only when associated with a development project or in a sensitive area. For example, this has been used when constructing sections of the present ski trail. Sales in sensitive areas (e.g. high recreational use areas, sites with endangered & threatened species concerns, scenic management areas) may also be reviewed by the Regional Forester or Bureau of Forest Management at Central Office.

10. SOLICIT BIDS AND SELECT WINNING BIDDER:

Typically once or twice a year, a group of timber sales are made available for sale. A "prospectus" is prepared that includes maps and prescriptions for all the individual timber sales as well as a number of other procedural items common to all of the sales. The prospectus is developed prior to advertising and sending out the group of sales available for a particular bid opening. The prospectus is made available to all potential bidders. The maps accompanying the prospectus are the same individual timber sale maps developed in the write-up step. Timber sale bid openings must be advertised in a paper with general circulation in the county in which the sale is located. Loggers submit sealed bids for the designated timber to be harvested on each sale. The high bid is generally accepted unless there are problems with past performance regarding the logger submitting the high bid.

11. TIMBER SALE CONTRACT:

The Department prepares a separate contract for each individual timber sale outlining the relationship between the state and the logger in addition to the specifications listed in the prospectus. A bond is also required to assure performance on the sale. The bond is 15% of the winning bid on the sale.

12. MONITORING THE SALE:

Foresters meet with the logger on site prior to starting the harvest and also periodically during the sale to ensure the harvesting is done according to the contract. The administering forester is responsible for maintaining records on the progress on the sale, the volume of wood harvested, and being sure the wood has been paid for according to the contract. Funds on state timber sales are remitted to the DNR central office for deposit into the State Conservation Fund.

13. SALE COMPLETION:

When all harvest operations have been completed—e.g. all the wood has been accounted for and paid for, all on-the-ground contract requirements have been met, and all the post-harvest RECON information has been updated—the sale can be officially "closed" and the performance bond returned to the logger.

The Department periodically monitors closed timber sales to assure that forest regeneration occurs as planned. Should the anticipated regeneration of a site fail for whatever reason, additional efforts are undertaken to reforest the site. This may include replanting, releasing young trees from competing vegetation or preparing the site for reseeding or replanting. The corresponding RECON information would again be updated in these instances. The Department will discuss any problems related to regenerating sites at the semi-annual public meetings.